

FHWA Has Released the Decision of FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) on the Reconstruction of Portions of Hyampom Road

The FHWA has determined that this project, for which Alternative 2, Reconstruct Existing Alignment has been selected, will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. Principle areas of public controversy have been addressed, and there are no major unresolved issues outstanding. This finding is based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), coordination with State and Federal agencies; public involvement; and applicable laws, executive orders, and regulations.

You can view the FONSI at the FHWA website: www.cflhd.gov/projects/ca/hyampomRoad/index.cfm

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at:

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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
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Segment 1 Completed

Most of you have probably noticed, the County's Segment 1 project, the first 3½ miles out of Hayfork, is done! (See photos on page 2.) The road was widened, curves were slightly straightened, and new base and pavement were installed this past summer. Construction took from May to September, and most of it was accomplished with just 30-minute delays. Thank you all for your cooperation through the construction period. That's one Segment down, and

only four more to go!



TRINITY COUNTY



HYAMPOM ROAD PROJECT
California Forest Highway 114, Hyampom Road
Shasta-Trinity National Forest
Trinity County, California
UPDATE

September 2006

Update on the Hyampom Road Reconstruction Project – September 2006

Public Hearings on Hyampom Road Held in April

The Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands Highway Division (FHWA) held two public hearings in Hyampom and Hayfork last April 5 and 6, which were well attended by the public. The meetings were held following public release of the Environmental Assessment (EA), a report which provided detailed information regarding the anticipated environmental consequences of the reconstruction of Hyampom Road, Segments 2, 3, 4 and 5. The meetings began with an overview of the project and proposed schedule by Ms. Stephanie Popiel, from the FHWA. Other representatives of FHWA, Trinity County and the US Forest Service were in attendance to answer any questions the public had about the project. Following the formal presentation, an open forum convened for public comment and questions from interested individuals. All the proceedings were recorded by a court reporter. The transcripts will be available to the public as part of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to be released in September, 2006. The following were recorded as some of the most significant concerns by the public at the two public hearings:

1. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) needs to be prepared for the project.

Response: Numerous technical studies and consultation with other federal agencies support the level of analysis and conclusions in the EA that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse affect on the environment as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EIS is only required if the proposed action by a federal agency has the potential to “significantly affect the quality of the environment.” Although the access and community impacts to Hyampom during construction will be very inconvenient, due to the small number of businesses and residents affected, and because the impacts are temporary, they are not considered significant.

2. What is considered a “significant effect” under NEPA? The lack of project effects (no effect or no negative effects) in this EA document is not supported.

Response: A significant effect under NEPA is an adverse environmental consequence from a project that exceeds

a “significance threshold” established for that environmental effect category, and for which mitigation measures are not



Existing Hyampom Road, Segment 5

available to reduce the adverse effect to a less than significant level. The effects of the project, both positive and negative, are identified throughout Chapter 3 of the EA. The conclusion of the EA is that the effects, combined with mitigation measures, are



Update on the Hyampom Road, (cont.)

not considered to be significant. However, the EA does not say that there are no effects. Under NEPA, an EIS is required only if the project will have “significant” effects to the natural or human environment.

3. The FHWA must consider alternatives that evaluate a smaller road reconstruction project.

A smaller scope of repairs (and expenditures) should be pursued by the FHWA for Hyampom Road.

Response: A discussion of a smaller project scope has been added to the EA.

Small improvements to the road do not meet the purpose and need for the project. In order to meet basic standards for two lanes, one in each direction, Segments 3 and 5 require reconstruction to meet minimum highway standards for rural roads. In order to address flooding problems in Segment 2, the road must be raised out of the floodplain, which requires full reconstruction. Segment 4 includes two hairpin curves which need to be reconstructed to be consistent with the adjacent segments once they are reconstructed.

Although some of the roadway deficiencies could be met by spot improvements, the road would still not meet the minimum highway standards for width and sight distance, and would continue to have drainage and erosion problems.

4. The FHWA did not consider detour routes (such as existing Forest Routes) for the public to use during project construction.

Response: One of the challenges of this project is that there are no suitable detour routes. Because none of the Forest Service roads in the area are 2 lane roads, the FHWA is not able to designate any of them as a detour route for safety reasons. Another reason the alternate forest roads cannot be designated as detours is that there are grades

and curves on those roads that large vehicles, such as a school bus, cannot traverse safely - after reviewing the conditions in the field it was concluded that there are no forest route detours that can handle all types of vehicles. The alternate routes will not be officially designated as detours, but they are common knowledge and can be used by locals and visitors if desired. A discussion of



Recently completed Hyampom Road, Segment 1

the alternate routes and the effect of anticipated additional use of them have been added to the EA. More responses to your comments can be found in the FONSI, to be released this September.

Images of the recently completely Segment 1 of Hyampom Road, constructed by Trinity County.



Highland Drive and Hyampom Road.



Recently completed Hyampom Road.

FHWA Delays Construction of Portions of Hyampom Road which will Reduce Road Closure Timeframes

During the April 2006 public hearings and also from letters received from the public on the EA, the FHWA received comments protesting the long construction periods and extensive road closures. In part due to public comments received on the EA, the FHWA decided to postpone reconstruction of Segments 2 and a portion of 4 to the year 2015. This will decrease the duration of reconstruction and road closures from 6 years to 3 or 4 years, followed by a break of about 5 years before work begins on Segment 2. A revised schedule of the Hyampom Road reconstruction project is shown below.

Hyampom Road Reconstruction Schedule	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Public Scoping		◆													
Environmental Analysis															
Segment 2, 4, & 5															
Segment 3															
Public Review															
Public Meeting	◆◆	◆◆			◆										
Decision Document															
Construction															
Segment 1					May - Sept										
Segment 3															
Segment 5 (some Seg 4)															
Segment 2 (some Seg 4)															

IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION REDUCED 50%

NIGHT WORK = 30 MINS DELAYS

Your Input is Important!

Impact of Construction Reduced 50%

At the public hearings held last April, many individuals expressed frustration that the FHWA staff is not listening to their views or that their input to reduce the scale of the project is not being considered during the environmental process. In fact, input from the public is important. Public comments received to date influenced the roadway design process which led to substantial adjustments in the width, design speed, curviness, and alignment of the proposed reconstruction. Since 2003, as a result of reducing the design speed and the roadway width in response to public comments, in Segment 5 the area of impact of the project has been reduced from 54 acres to 27 acres of disturbance and the volume of excavation has been reduced from 530,000 cubic yards to 150,000 cubic yards.

Night Work = 30-Minute Delays

Another change as a result of public comments includes night work provisions. Although these were intended to be sporadic and not regular closures, many people were concerned. As a result, we have changed the night work provisions to only allow 30 minute delays at night rather than full closures.